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CORRESPONDENCE

CHAUCER AND HORACE

Eight¹ passages have been pointed out² in which Chaucer apparently had lines from Horace in mind. For five of these, convenient second-hand sources have already been suggested:

(1) In *The Tale of Melibeus*, ¶ 50 (*C. T.* B 2752), the sentence,

And right so as by richesces ther comen manye goodes, right so by poverte come ther manye harmes and yveles,

points to Horace, *Epistle* 1.6.37:

et genus et formam regina pecunia donat.

Skeat³ notes that this line occurs in the Latin version of the story, the *Liber Consolationis et Consilii* of Albertano of Brescia.⁴ It is also quoted—along with the line which follows it in the epistle—by John of Salisbury in the *Polycraticus* 5.17 and in the *Metalogicus* 1.4.⁵

(2) Lines 56-58 of *The Maunciples Tale* (*C. T.* H 160-162),

But god it woot, ther may no man embrace
As to destreyne a thing, which that nature
Hath naturelly set in a creature,

call to mind Horace, *Epistle* 1.10.24:

Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret.

“And this,” according to Skeat, “is the very passage which Chaucer had in view, as it is quoted and commented on in *Le Roman de la Rose* 14221-8.”⁶ Dr. G. L. Hamilton⁷ points out that John of Salisbury likewise quotes this line⁸ in the *Polycraticus* 3.8.

¹ Not counting the references to Lollius as a writer on the Trojan War. For Horace's probable connection with Chaucer's Lollius, see K. Young in Chaucer Society Publications, 2nd ser., no. 40, Appendix C, pp. 189-195.

² See E. P. Hammond: *Chaucer: A Bibliographical Manual*, pp. 91, 92.

³ W. W. Skeat: *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, v, 219.

⁴ See edition by Thor Sundby for Chaucer Society (1873), p. 98.

⁵ See Keller and Holder's ed. of Horace (Leipzig, 1864), ii, p. 221.

⁶ Skeat, v, 439.

⁷ G. L. Hamilton: *The Indebtedness of Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde to Guido Delle Colonne's Historia Trojana*, pp. 143 f.

⁸ With the omission of the first word.

- (3) In lines 251, 252 of the same tale (*C. T. H* 355, 356),

Thing that is seyð, is seyð; and forth it gooth
Though him repente, or be him leef or looth,

Chaucer appears to be echoing the thought of Horace *Epistle* 1. 18.71:

et semel emissum volat irrevocabile verbum.

He may have found the line, as Skeat observes,⁹ in *Le Roman de la Rose* 16746-8, or in the *Liber Consolationis et Consilii*.¹⁰

- (4) In this tale again, lines 12-14 (*C. T. H* 116-118),

Certes the king of Thebes, Amphion,
That with his singing walled that citee,
Coude never singen half so wel as he,

remind us of Horace, *Ars Poetica* 394 f.:

dictus et Amphion, Thebanæ conditor urbis
saxa movere sono testudinis et prece blanda
ducere quo vellet.

But the story of Amphion is such a commonplace in medieval literature that there is no special reason for thinking that Chaucer went to Horace for it. Lounsbury notes¹¹ that it is referred to more than once by Statius, and that it is given in full by Boccaccio in the *De Genealogia Deorum Gentilium*.¹²

- (5) Lines 164-166 of the B-version of the Prologue to *The Legend of Good Women*,

But I ne clepe nat innocence folye,
Ne fals pitee, for 'vertu is the mene,'
As Etik saith, in swich maner I mene,

contain, as Professor Lowes has pointed out,¹³ the same doctrine as is expressed in Horace *Epistle* I.18.9:

virtus est medium vitiorum et utrimque reductum.

Professor Lowes calls attention to the fact that the Latin line is paraphrased by John of Salisbury in the *Polycraticus* 8.13.¹⁴

For the following three passages, the editors of Chaucer have not pointed out, so far as I know, any ready second-hand references:

⁹ Skeat, v, 443.

¹⁰ See Thor Sundby, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

¹¹ T. R. Lounsbury: *Studies in Chaucer*, ii, 262.

¹² Lib. v, cap. 30. For Chaucer's familiarity with this work, see Lounsbury, II, 232 f.

¹³ See the article on Chaucer's "Etik" in *Mod. Lang. Notes*, xxv, 87-89.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

- (1) Lines 22 ff. in Book ii of *Troilus and Criseyde*,

Ye knowe eek, that in forme of speche is chaunge
 With-inne a thousand yeer, and wordes tho
 That hadden prys, now wonder nyce and straunge
 Us thinketh hem; and yet they spake hem so, etc.—

are apparently borrowed from Horace, *Ars Poetica* 70-72:

Multa renascentur quae iam cecidere, cadentque
 quae nunc sunt in honore vocabula, si volet usus,
 quem penes arbitrium est et ius et norma loquendi.

But since quotations from the *Ars Poetica* were so frequent in the Middle Ages,¹⁵ we need not suppose that Chaucer took the verses directly from Horace. John of Salisbury quotes them twice in the *Metalogicus*,¹⁶ and it is just possible that Chaucer copied them from him.¹⁷

- (2) Lines 1028-1036 of the second book of *Troilus and Criseyde*—where Chaucer refers to the harper who plays continually on one string—recall the *Ars Poetica* 355-356:¹⁸

ut citharoedus
 Ridetur chorda qui semper oberrat eadem.

But, in all probability, the phrase “harping on one string” became proverbial at an early date, and hence this proves nothing as to Chaucer’s familiarity with Horace.¹⁹

- (3) Lines 1041-1043 of the same book of *Troilus and Criseyde*,

For if a peyntour wolde peynte a pyk
 With asses feet, and hede it as an ape
 It cordeth nought; so nere it but a Iape,

¹⁵ Skeat, II, *lii* f.

¹⁶ *Metalogicus* 1.16 and 3.3. See J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, 2nd series, vol. 199 (Paris, 1855). Line 72 is quoted again in the same work 3.4. See Keller and Holder, *op. cit.*, II, 336.

¹⁷ To my knowledge, there are no other instances of Chaucer’s borrowing from the *Metalogicus*.

¹⁸ Lounsbury, II, 261.

¹⁹ Skeat includes this passage from Chaucer in his *Early English Proverbs*, p. 70. In *The Proverbs, Epigrams and Miscellanies* of John Heywood, we find such expressions as “Ye harp on the string that giveth no melody,” “harping on that string,” “Harp no more on that string” (See edition by J. S. Farmer, London, 1906, pp. 63, 96, 184). Lounsbury, in commenting upon this passage, says (II, 262) that it is “one of those comparisons that are too inevitable in their nature to warrant the drawing of inferences of any sort.” I have not been able to find any second-hand source where Chaucer might conveniently have found Horace quoted.

are certainly very much like the opening verses of the *Ars Poetica*. "While the objects selected for comparison vary, the ideas are essentially the same."²⁰ In this case, John of Salisbury again may have been Chaucer's source, for Horace's verses are partly quoted in the *Polycraticus* 2.18:²¹

disiuncta coniungit, ut si humano capiti cervicem iungat equinam varias
inducens undique plumas, ut iuxta poetam turpiter atrum desinat in piscem
mulier formosa superne.²²

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SOURCES OF *In Memoriam* IN TENNYSON'S EARLY POEMS

Among the discarded poems of Tennyson's 1830 volume is a group of somewhat irregular sonnets entitled "Love."¹ The first nineteen lines of the group express the central conceptions of *In Memoriam* with remarkable fidelity to its spirit and phraseology. When we consider that these sonnets were written more than three years before the death of Hallam, the significance of the parallel becomes apparent.

Few of the author's discarded poems have been suppressed as effectually as these sonnets. Omitted from every authorized edition since their first appearance, they are ignored as completely in Baker's *Concordance* of 1914 as in Brightwell's of 1869. It is true that they have recently come into print again (as in Collins' *The Early Poems of Alfred Lord Tennyson*, and in the appendix to Rolfe's edition of the *Works*); but here it is only an inconspicuous appearance in small type and without comment.

As far back as 1879 it was suggested² that "it is . . . indispensable to the right understanding of *In Memoriam* that we should see what Tennyson had actually accomplished during the life-time of Hallam;" but as far as I have been able to learn, there

²⁰ Lounsbury, II, 262; Skeat, II, 472.

²¹ John of Salisbury quotes the 4th line of this passage again in the *Polycraticus* 2.15. See Keller and Holder, *op. cit.*, II, 327, 8.

²² For Chaucer's knowledge of the *Polycraticus*, see Lounsbury, II, 362-4; Hamilton, pp. 143 f.; W. W. Woolcombe in Chaucer Society Essays, 2nd ser., no. 16, pp. 295 ff. (an argument that Chaucer was not a borrower from John of Salisbury); J. S. P. Tatlock, *The Development and Chronology of Chaucer's Works*, p. 100; also see John of Salisbury in index of Skeat, vol. VI.

¹ The third of the group contains sixteen lines.

² Shepherd's *Tennysonianana*, 2d ed., 1879, p. 26.